



## What is an epidural?

It is a small tube placed in your back by an anesthesiologist that delivers medication. The medication temporarily numbs the nerves carrying pain signals in your back which reduces pain in both labour and delivery. You should still be able to move your legs and push with an epidural.



Want to know more?

Scan these QR codes with your phone camera!



Video of Procedure  
(Labour Pains website)  
Available in 26 languages!  
<https://www.labourpains.org/>



Further Information  
(SOAP website)  
<https://www.soap.org/information-for-mothers>



Pain Management Options  
During Labour At KGH  
<https://kingstonhsc.ca/labour-and-delivery/having-your-baby-khsc>

Ask your anesthesiologist if an epidural is right for you.

Kingston Health  
Sciences Centre

Centre des sciences de  
la santé de Kingston

## Do you have questions about epidurals?

Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine



Hôpital  
Hotel Dieu  
Hospital

**KGH**

Hôpital Général de  
Kingston General  
Hospital



### How can an epidural help me?

- Provides the most effective type of continuous pain relief during labour and delivery
- Safe for you and your baby
- Allows you to be fully awake and aware of the birth experience or allows you to rest
- Helps to lower stress facilitates your participation in birthing and bonding with your baby
- May be used for vaginal assisted delivery or cesarean section if required



### What are the possible side effects and risk?

- You may have a sore back after labour but long lasting back pain is not related to epidurals. Back pain is common after any pregnancy and delivery.
- You may experience a fever, itching, problems peeing or heaviness in the legs. We also ask that you only drink clear fluids once an epidural is in place. It is possible that an epidural can prolong labour.
- Your doctor will discuss these potential risks with you and answer your questions to help you make an informed decision about your pain management plan.



1 in 15 women may still be uncomfortable and need additional medications to manage their pain.

Chance with an Epidural	→	Similar Chance
Blood pressure drop (1:50)	→	Today being a holiday
Bad headache (1:100-500)	→	Today being your birthday
Persistent numbness (1:10,000-13,000)	→	Having a car accident today
Infection (1:100,000)	→	Guessing the last 5 digits of a phone number
Serious nerve damage (1:250,000)	→	Finding snow in Cuba
Bleeding (1:million)	→	Being struck by lightning this year

### Women in Kingston want to know...

#### How much will I be able to move?

Epidurals block your pain nerves but shouldn't block your movement nerves as much. You should still be able to move your legs and push. If your legs are strong you can walk with assistance.

#### When can I expect to get an epidural?

You may request an epidural at any point during your labour. It does not require a specific cervical dilation. An anesthesiologist will try to come as soon as possible and it's their goal to be with you within an hour.

#### Will it cause permanent paralysis?

This chance is extremely rare. If everyone in Kingston got an epidural, this may happen to 1 person.

### Will it affect the baby?

No, epidurals are **SAFE** for **BOTH** you and your baby.

